Nothing But 'Net – Week #14 (02/02/2009) – Ejection Week, And Second-Trimester Grades

The Week In Review

The University of Michigan men's basketball team played two games this week, and they lost both of them. On Wednesday (01/28/2009), they lost at Ohio State 72-54, then on Saturday (01/31/2009), they lost at (#16) Purdue 67-49. The two losses drop Michigan's record to 14-8 (4-6 in Big Ten play).

The big story this week was the ejections. In the OSU game, Zack Novak swung an elbow on a rebound, and it connected with an OSU player. That got him ejected, and suspended for the Purdue game. In the Purdue game, Manny Harris caught a pass and swung an elbow, and it connected with a Purdue player. He was also ejected. In Novak's case, he only missed the last 1:25 of the OSU game, but Harris missed almost the entire 2nd half of the Purdue game. His status for the next game (home vs. Penn State on Thursday 02/05/2009) hasn't been determined yet. While Novak's elbow looked intentional, Harris' didn't. Harris did act slightly frustrated by the tight defense Purdue was throwing at him, but it didn't look like he threw an elbow because of it. He was just trying to get some room to see the whole court.

Even without the elbows and the ejections, Michigan wasn't going to win either game. Michigan has only won one road game in the Big Ten so far, and it was in overtime against a truly pathetic Indiana team on 01/07/2009. There was no way they were going to win at Ohio State or Purdue. They put up a good fight in both games, but once the wheels started coming off, there were no miracle comebacks.

Game Statistics

First, let's look at the shooting statistics from the Ohio State game:

Team	Field goals	3-Pointers	Free throws
Michigan	15-49 (30.6%)	7-26 (26.9%)	17-19 (89.5%)
Ohio State	25-44 (56.8%)	5-16 (31-3%)	17-25 (68.0%)
Advantage	Ohio State	Ohio State	Michigan

Those 10 extra field goals by OSU more than make up for the 2 extra 3-pointers by Michigan.

Now, let's look at the non-shooting statistics from the Ohio State game:

Team	Rebounds	Assists	Turnovers	Blocks	Steals
Michigan	30	11	21	0	6
Ohio State	26	13	15	7	8
Advantage	Michigan	OSU	OSU	OSU	OSU

It's hard to believe that Michigan actually won the rebounding battle. Of course, they turned those 4 extra possessions into 6 extra turnovers, so they lost ground there.

Next, let's look at the shooting statistics from the Purdue game:

Team	Field goals	3-Pointers	Free throws
Michigan	18-50 (36.0%)	6-23 (26.1%)	7-13 (53.8%)
Purdue	22-49 (44.9%)	7-18 (38.9%)	16-21 (76.2%)

Advantage	Purdue	Purdue	Purdue

Total domination by Purdue.

Finally, let's look at the non-shooting statistics from the Purdue game:

Team	Rebounds	Assists	Turnovers	Blocks	Steals
Michigan	26	14	18	1	8
Purdue	33	15	15	1	11
Advantage	Purdue	Purdue	Purdue	Even	Purdue

Sweep: Purdue won (or tied) every statistical category.

Season 3-Point Shooting

The way UM's offense is set up, they need to get off at least 20 3-pointers, and hit at least 40% of them to win. In the past, I counted a win where UM didn't hit 20/40 as "fits the theory", but no more. To fit my theory, they either have to hit 20/40 and win, or hit less than 20/40 and lose. If they win, but fail to hit 20/40, that doesn't fit my theory.

Here's how things have gone so far:

Date	Opponent	3-Point Shooting	Result	Fits Theory?
11/06/2008	Saginaw Valley State (exhibition)	11-24 (45.8%)	W	Y
11/11/2008	Michigan Tech	8-24 (33.3%)	W	N
11/12/2008	Northeastern	5-14 (35.7%)	W	N
11/20/2008	UCLA	5-20 (25.0%)	W	N
11/21/2008	Duke	6-22 (27.3%)	L	Y
11/25/2008	Norfolk State	9-27 (33.3%)	W	N
11/29/2008	Savannah State	4-22 (18.2%)	W	N
12/03/2008	Maryland	12-29 (41.4%)	L	N
12/06/2008	Duke	7-16 (43.8%)	W	N
12/13/2008	Eastern Michigan	16-33 (48.5%)	W	Y
12/20/2008	Oakland	13-29 (44.8%)	W	Y
12/22/2008	Florida Gulf Coast	12-42 (28.6%)	W	N
12/29/2008	North Carolina Central	9-30 (30.0%)	W	N
12/31/2008	Wisconsin	8-24 (33.3%)	L	Y
01/04/2009	Illinois	11-27 (40.7%)	W	Y
01/07/2009	Indiana	12-40 (30.0%)	W	N
01/11/2009	Iowa	7-22 (31.8%)	W	N
01/14/2009	Illinois	7-26 (26.9%)	L	Y
01/17/2009	Ohio State	10-29 (34.5%)	L	Y
01/20/2009	Penn State	5-30 (16.7%)	L	Y
01/24/2009	Northwestern	9-27 (33.3%)	W	N
01/28/2009	Ohio State	7-26 (26.9%)	L	Y
01/31/2009	Purdue	6-23 (26.1%)	L	Y
Totals		199-606 (32.8%)		11-12

Two more poor shooting performances from 3-point range, two more losses. Any questions?

Individual Statistics

Since Zack Novak was suspended for the Purdue game, Coach Beilein couldn't go with his new favorite starting lineup in both games this week. He started C.J. Lee instead. Here's how the starters did:

Player	Field Goals		3-Pointers		Free Throws		Points	
	OSU	PU	OSU	PU	OSU	PU	OSU	PU
Kelvin Grady	1-1	0-1	1-1	0-1	0-0	2-2	3	2
Manny Harris	5-13	2-7	2-4	0-1	10-11	1-2	22	5
C.J. Lee	Bench	1-3	Bench	0-2	Bench	0-2	Bench	2
Laval Lucas-Perry	2-5	1-4	2-4	1-4	2-2	1-2	8	4
Zack Novak	2-9	DNP	2-8	DNP	0-0	DNP	6	DNP
DeShawn Sims	5-12	3-10	0-1	2-4	3-3	2-4	13	10
Totals	15-40 37.5%	7-25 28.0%	7-18 38.9%	3-12 25.0%	15-16 93.8%	6-12 50.0%	52	23

As a group, the starters had a lousy week. Some of their percentages are good (free throws vs. OSU), and some of their percentages are terrible (free throws vs. Purdue). They also didn't score enough points vs. Purdue.

Individually, only Sims hit double figures in both games. He played well in both games, but he didn't get much help. Harris had a good game (finally) vs. OSU, but he was struggling in the Purdue game before he was ejected.

None of the other starters contributed much. They're all capable of much more.

Here's how the bench players did this week:

Player	Field Goals		3-Pointers		Free Throws		Points	
	OSU	PU	OSU	PU	OSU	PU	OSU	PU
Stu Douglass	0-6	0-6	0-5	0-4	2-3	0-0	2	0
Zack Gibson	0-1	3-4	0-1	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	6
C.J. Lee	0-1	Starter	0-1	Starter	0-0	Starter	0	Starter
David Merritt	0-0	1-2	0-0	0-1	0-0	0-0	0	2
Eric Puls	DNP	2-3	DNP	1-1	DNP	0-0	DNP	5
Jevohn Shepherd	0-0	4-7	0-0	1-2	0-0	1-1	0	10
Anthony Wright	0-1	1-3	0-1	1-3	0-0	0-0	0	3
Totals	0-9 0.0%	11-25 44.0%	0-8 0.0%	3-11 27.3%	2-3 66.7%	1-1 100.0%	2	26

As a group, the bench players also had a lousy week. Their shooting percentages were also all over the map, and they didn't score enough points vs. OSU. Michigan needs consistent help from their bench.

Individually, on Shepherd hit double figures in either game, but he didn't do much in the OSU game. Gibson played pretty well in the Purdue game, but no one else contributed much.

Here's about the only good news for the whole week: Puls still hasn't missed a 3-pointer in his career. He's now 3-for-3.

First-Trimester Grades

As I wrote back in late December, this season breaks up nicely into 3 parts: the non-conference portion (with one non-conference game in February), the 1st half of the Big Ten season, and the 2nd half of the Big Ten season. Michigan has now played 10 Big Ten games, so they're just past the halfway point of the Big Ten season.

Here are their second-trimester grades:

Player	Grade	Comments
Freshmen		
Ben Cronin	Inc.	Ben only played in 2 games, for a total of 10 minutes, and he's been redshirted for this season due to a hip injury that required surgery. He'll still have freshman eligibility next season.
Stu Douglass	B-	Stu played well at the beginning of the season, but then he trailed off. Once he was replaced in the starting lineup, he mostly disappeared.
Laval Lucas-Perry	B	For his first 6 games, Laval looked like the third scorer (along with Manny Harris and DeShawn Sims) that Michigan needs, but since then he has lost his shooting touch.
Zack Novak	B	Zack is a scrappy player, and he plays much bigger than his actual size.
Corey Person	Inc.	Corey hasn't played in any games, so we haven't seen what he can do. He's on the team as a practice player.
Eric Puls	Inc.	Eric hasn't played in enough games to see what he can do. He's on the team as a practice player.
Sophomores		
Kelvin Grady	B	Kelvin has played pretty well coming off the bench. He runs the offense well, he's very fast, and he's shot 3-pointers well.
Manny Harris	B+	Manny started out strong this season, but he's tailed off in the Big Ten part of the schedule. When he's "on", he shoots well, he can drive the lane, he rebounds well, and he plays good defense. Most importantly, he's a leader on the floor. When he's "off", he tends to try too hard.
Anthony Wright	C	Anthony began the season as a starter, but he has moved further and further down the bench as the season has gone on. He's got a nice 3-point shot, but he needs to work on some other aspects of his game, including ballhandling, footwork, and help defense.
Juniors		
Zack Gibson	B-	Zack has done pretty well this season. He's the tallest player on the team, with Ben Cronin out. He plays good, solid defense, and he's got a nice shooting touch. He needs to work on his footwork and his ballhandling a little.
DeShawn Sims	B+	DeShawn is the most improved player this season. He has been a real leader on the court, with good offense and defense. He's been a beast on the boards, often playing against the biggest players on the opposing teams.
Seniors		
C.J. Lee	B-	C.J. is fast, and he runs the offense pretty well. He's got a pretty good shot, but he seems afraid to take it

		sometimes. He needs to be more aggressive out there.
David Merritt	B-	David has started all 11 games, and he's done a nice job out there. He runs the offense very well, and he can bring the ball upcourt against heavy pressure. When he does shoot, he shoots pretty well.
Jevohn Shepherd	C	Jevohn is another player who went from starter to bench player to the end of the bench. When he's in the game, he's very energetic and athletic, and he's a tenacious defender, but he doesn't have a good complete game yet. He needs to work on his ballhandling and shooting.
Coach		
John Beilein	B	After the non-conference portion of the schedule, it looked like Coach Beilein had really turned things around, after a rough first season. Now, it's not looking so good. He needs to figure some way to shore up the post defense, and to get the team's confidence back.

These grades are all down (or held even) from the first set.

Big Ten Report

My weekly Big Ten Report is now a separate article, here.

The Big Picture

This Michigan team peaked at Christmas time, and has been spiraling downward ever since. The Wisconsin game on 12/31/2008 just destroyed their confidence, and they've been playing scared ever since. Sure, they snuck out a few wins at home (Illinois, Iowa, and Northwestern) and one on the road (at lowly Indiana), but they're basically done for this season.

The frustrating part about this season is that nothing much changed during the Wisconsin game, they just lost their confidence, and their shooting touch. The teams in the Big Ten didn't have to look very hard at the videos of Michigan's non-conference games to see how to beat them: pound the ball inside on offense, and smother Manny Harris on defense. That's what they've all done, and it's worked. Michigan has been getting the same wide-open looks at 3-pointers that they got in the non-conference part of the season, but they just aren't making them any more. Are they tired? Maybe, but I still think it's just a matter of confidence.

Last week, I guessed that Michigan should be able to win at home vs. Penn State, and on the road at Northwestern, and at Iowa. That was before Penn State went into East Lansing and beat Michigan State (72-68) on Sunday 02/01/2009. Now, the Penn State game at home doesn't look so promising. It is entirely possible that Michigan might only win 2 more games this season (at Northwestern and Iowa), which would give them a record of 16-15. That sure sounds like the NIT to me.

Here's the 2008-2009 schedule/results:

Date	Opponent	Site	Result	Score	Record
11/06/2008 (Thu)	Saginaw Valley State (exh)	Ann Arbor	W	81-55	0-0
2K Sports Classic benefiting Coaches vs. Cancer					
11/11/2008 (Tue)	Michigan Tech	Ann Arbor	W	77-55	1-0
11/12/2008 (Wed)	Northeastern	Ann Arbor	W	76-56	2-0

Date	Opponent	Site	Result	Score	Record
11/20/2008 (Thu)	UCLA	New York, NY	W	55-52	3-0
11/21/2008 (Fri)	Duke	New York, NY	L	71-56	3-1
11/25/2008 (Tue)	Norfolk State	Ann Arbor	W	83-49	4-1
11/29/2008 (Sat)	Savannah State	Ann Arbor	W	66-64 (ot)	5-1
ACC/Big Ten Challenge					
12/03/2008 (Wed)	at Maryland	College Park, MD	L	75-70	5-2
12/06/2008 (Sat)	Duke	Ann Arbor	W	81-73	6-2
12/13/2008 (Sat)	Eastern Michigan	Ann Arbor	W	91-60	7-2
12/20/2008 (Sat)	vs. Oakland	Auburn Hills, MI	W	89-76	8-2
12/22/2008 (Mon)	Florida Gulf Coast	Ann Arbor	W	76-59	9-2
12/29/2008 (Mon)	North Carolina Central	Ann Arbor	W	77-57	10-2
12/31/2009 (Wed)	Wisconsin	Ann Arbor	L	73-61	10-3 (0-1)
01/04/2009 (Sun)	Illinois	Ann Arbor	W	74-64	11-3 (1-1)
01/07/2009 (Wed)	at Indiana	Bloomington, IN	W	72-66 (ot)	12-3 (2-1)
01/11/2009 (Sun)	Iowa	Ann Arbor	W	64-49	13-3 (3-1)
01/14/2009 (Wed)	at Illinois	Champaign, IL	L	66-51	13-4 (3-2)
01/17/2009 (Sat)	Ohio State	Ann Arbor	L	65-58	13-5 (3-3)
01/20/2009 (Tue)	at Penn State	State College, PA	L	73-58	13-6 (3-4)
01/24/2009 (Sat)	Northwestern	Ann Arbor	W	68-59	14-6 (4-4)
01/28/2009 (Wed)	at Ohio State	Columbus, OH	L	72-54	14-7 (4-5)
01/31/2009 (Sat)	at Purdue	West Lafayette, IN	L	67-49	14-8 (4-6)
02/05/2009 (Thu)	Penn State	Ann Arbor			
02/07/2009 (Sat)	at Connecticut	Storrs, CT			
02/10/2009 (Tue)	Michigan State	Ann Arbor			
02/15/2009 (Sun)	at Northwestern	Evanston, IL			
02/19/2009 (Thu)	Minnesota	Ann Arbor			
02/22/2009 (Sun)	at Iowa	Iowa City, IA			
02/26/2009 (Thu)	Purdue	Ann Arbor			
03/01/2009 (Sun)	at Wisconsin	Madison, WI			
03/07/2009 (Sat) or 03/08/2009 (Sun)	at Minnesota	Minneapolis, MN			
Big Ten Tournament					
03/12/2009 (Thu)	First Round	Indianapolis, IN			
03/13/2009 (Fri)	Quarterfinal	Indianapolis, IN			
03/14/2009 (Sat)	Semifinal	Indianapolis, IN			
03/15/2009 (Sun)	Championship	Indianapolis, IN			

The Upcoming Week

As you can see in the schedule above, Michigan plays two games this week. On Wednesday (02/05/2009, 7:00 p.m., Big Ten Network) they play Penn State in Crisler Arena, and on Saturday (02/07/2009, 6:00 p.m., ESPN) they play at (#2) Connecticut. They don't stand much chance at Connecticut, but the Penn State game is a "toss up".

Come on down to Crisler and cheer on the Wolverines.

Go Blue!